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Inside

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

KEVIN CONWAY,
DIRECTOR, UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

"In fact, hunters continue to foot the bill for most wildlife conservation and management in Utah and across the country."

THANK YOU for picking up this issue of Wildlife Review. I hope you enjoy reading it. There are several great articles in this issue aimed at informing and educating sportsmen and wildlife enthusiasts about the work we do.

Justin Dolling's excellent article about Utah waterfowl management areas points up the value of these areas, not only to hunters, but to birdwatchers as well. While a wide range of Utah citizens enjoy these areas, it's ironic and a little frustrating to me that sportsmen's dollars alone paid for and continue to fully fund these areas.

In fact, hunters continue to foot the bill for most wildlife conservation and management in Utah and across the country. Over the years we have tried to find ways to allow who we call "nonconsumptive users" (those people who don't hunt or fish, but still enjoy wildlife) to help pay for wildlife conservation and management. Thus far, we have not found an effective way to do that.

There are a lot of reasons for this. I think one of the biggest reasons is that too many people mistakenly believe a portion of their tax dollars go toward wildlife conservation and management in the states. While it's true that some states, especially back east, get a reasonable share of state General Fund money, that is not the case in Utah and most western states. Last year, hunters and anglers provided almost 90 percent of the funding for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. The money came primarily from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and the federal excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment.

This funding scenario must change substantially, and soon, if Utah and other state wildlife agencies are to continue to conserve and manage wildlife and fish populations at current levels. Over the next few years, the Division of Wildlife Resources will be developing and enhancing partnerships with a diverse coalition of wildlife enthusiasts, from bird hunters to bird watchers, in an effort to find innovative new ways to fund wildlife management. One thing is clear: with the number of hunters per capita declining in Utah and across the nation, this loyal constituency can no longer be expected to pay for all wildlife management. It's time for other users, whether we call them nonconsumptive or not, to step up to the plate.

BY JERICHO WHITING
CENTRAL REGION WILDLIFE TECHNICIAN

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Bighorns

Providing a drink to thirsty animals

HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS are an important part of wildlife management. Biologists are exhilarated when habitat projects are completed and benefit wildlife. Such was the case in Rock Canyon, Provo in summer 2003, and a group of hunters from the Division of Wildlife Resources' Dedicated Hunter program helped make it happen by constructing a much needed water-catchment basin for recently translocated Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

Bighorn sheep are impressive animals. Their sure-footedness in steep, tenuous terrain is admirable, and the lambs' ability to amble alongside their mothers is extraordinary.

Rocky Mountain bighorns are native to central and northern Utah. They were once abundant and were used extensively by Native Americans and early explorers and settlers. However, due to various anthropogenic influences, bighorn populations in northern Utah were presumed extinct by the 1930s.

Several scattered sightings were reported until the 1960s, however, and in 1966 the situation began to turn around. The reason for the improvement was aggressive efforts by the Division of Wildlife Resources and other organizations to reintroduce Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep to central and northern Utah.

As part of this effort, in January 2001—through a generous financial donation by former Jazz basketball player and sportsman Karl Malone—the Utah Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep sportsman's group and the DWR acquired 32 bighorns from Alberta, Canada. Twenty-two of these animals were released in Rock Canyon near Provo. It's been my duty to monitor this herd.

In 2003, I observed a group of bighorns using a water source in Rock Canyon that I didn't know existed. I hiked to the spot and discovered a perennial spring drooling a mixture of water and mud down a steep rock face. The water ran for almost 40 feet. From the numerous game trails converging to the spot, it was apparent bighorns were visiting the area, but accessing the water was difficult as it quickly mixed with surrounding dirt, forming a muddy mess.

In mid-July, five Dedicated Hunters (Morris, Jason and Todd Cloward; Kirk Barton; and David Terry) and I clambered our way up this precipitous rock ravine, toting an 80-pound jackhammer. After several hours of cliff-hanging and hole-digging, we mined two basins into the rock face. These basins collected the dripping

Water sources for bighorns in Rock Creek Canyon have improved.

The bighorn sheep herd is faring well in Rock Creek Canyon above Provo. A recent habitat improvement project helps prevent the sheep from moving down into urban areas when late summer water levels are distresssed.

water into pools, providing a much-needed water source for the bighorns.

Since completion of the watering basins, the bighorns have used these pools many times. With continuing drought conditions and numerous bighorns from this population moving down to urban areas for water, improvement projects similar to this are vital to the herd's success. Thanks to Karl Malone, the Utah Chapter of FNAWS and the DWR for funding and making this bighorn sheep reintroduction a reality. Thanks also to the Dedicated Hunters for their hard work on this important habitat project. This project has the potential to help alleviate some of the late-summer water stress on these bighorns, hopefully helping this population grow to provide enjoyment for sportsman and wildlife watchers.

JERICHO WHITING

Taking turns with the jackhammer, the crew was tired and dirty by day's end.

Missing from the area since the 1930s, bighorn sheep were recently re-introduced to the mountains above Provo, Utah.

The Great Salt Lake wetlands not only offer superb waterfowl hunting, but they are home to numerous species, which provide many recreational opportunities for all of us.

BY JUSTIN DOLLING
FARMINGTON BAY WMA SUPERVISOR

TREASURES FOR ALL

Waterfowl

Utah's Waterfowl Management Areas

EVEN THOUGH it's the second driest state in the nation, Utah offers a tremendous amount of public wetlands to hunters, bird watchers, photographers and other recreational users. Opportunities for wetland visitors are vast when compared to other western states. And some of the best public waterfowl hunting in the West is found in Utah, in the marshes near Great Salt Lake.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is the agency responsible for managing Utah's numerous state-owned wetland complexes, which are called waterfowl management areas (WMAs).

Using hunter's dollars, the agency operates 24 WMAs encompassing 120,000 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat. Eleven full-time personnel are responsible for daily operations. These include project administration, habitat maintenance, biological surveys, facility maintenance, overseeing waterfowl and upland game hunt programs, and conducting tours for school children and other tourists.

During the waterfowl season, visitors enjoy unrestricted access to the WMAs 24 hours per day, seven days per week. On several WMAs, access is also available outside the hunting season. Millions of dollars in improvements have been made to these lands since the first public waterfowl hunting area in the nation, the Public Shooting Grounds WMA west of Corinne, Utah, opened in 1923.

Over the years, hunted and nonhunted wildlife have benefited from many state-sponsored wetland enhancement projects. The lands managed under this program provide habitat for more than 200 bird species, 20 mammals species and eight species of amphibians and reptiles. Of the 228 or more species found on state WMAs, only 32 are hunted by licensed hunters.

Who funds these areas?

Hunters must purchase a state hunting license before hunting waterfowl. Hunters who are 16 years old or older must also purchase a federal duck stamp. The DWR receives the revenue from the hunting license, while the federal government collects the duck stamp money. To fund the state WMAs, the DWR must rely solely on hunting license revenue matched with federal aid dollars. Little, if any, general tax dollars are available to supplement the daily operation of the WMAs.

Federal aid dollars are available to states through a program know as the Pitman-Robertson Act, which is an excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition. The federal government collects the tax from the sale of hunting-related arms and ammunition and then distributes the revenue back to the states. Federal aid money is given to each state based on how large the state is and how many people in the state purchased at least one hunting license during the past year.

Funding generated through the sale of Utah hunting licenses is then matched with federal aid tax money at a ratio of 25 percent to 75 percent. For example, for every dollar the state collects from hunting licenses the federal government matches with three dollars, assuming funds from the Pitman-Robertson Act are available.

Waterfowl hunters get a bargain

In Utah, the cost of an adult small game license is $17. Those who purchase a small game license can hunt both waterfowl and upland game. A combination license, which covers small game hunting and fishing, costs $34.

Utah has about 22,000 licensed waterfowl hunters who generate approximately $187,000 annually. However, the cost to run Utah's WMAs each year is about $1 million. This is more than the amount generated by waterfowl hunters. Because of this, the WMAs must be supplemented by other hunting license dollars.

To obtain the $1 million necessary to run the program, the DWR needs approximately $250,000 annually to

During peak migratory sessons, many species of birds and waterfowl use Utah's important wetlands.

match with $750,000 in federal aid. Without the waterfowl license revenue and assistance from federal aid and other Utah hunt programs, waterfowl hunters would have to pay an average of $26 for each WMA hunting trip.

To put this in perspective, the average waterfowl hunter makes seven WMA hunting trips a year. He would have to pay $182 annually versus the current license fee of $17. Utah's waterfowl hunters are definitely getting a bargain!

Nonhunters get a bargain too

Although hunters provide all of the funding to operate Utah's WMAs, many unlicensed visitors enjoy the areas at no cost. Visitors who do not buy a hunting license, but who use the WMAs to bird watch, photograph, bicycle, jog and for environmental education, are enjoying a resource funded by hunters.

Currently, this is not a major issue because the DWR is able to cover the operating expenses. And even though hunters are paying the bill, the DWR believes the WMAs should be available for everyone to enjoy. Hunter numbers across the nation are declining, however. At the same time general recreational uses, such as bird watching, are increasi

Recent trends

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service's 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation found that bird watching is one of the fastest growing outdoor recreational activities in the country, while participation in hunting is stable or slightly declining.

A study conducted from 1997 through 2002 at the Farmington Bay WMA reflects that national trend. The survey found hunter trips decreased 3.2 percent per year during the five-year period, while overall visitation increased 5.6 percent each year. Of the average annual 70,000 documented visitor trips to the Farmington Bay WMA, 15 percent (10,500 trips) were to hunt waterfowl and 85 percent (59,500 trips) were for reasons other than hunting. The following year, in 2003, total visitation to Farmington Bay was estimated at 80,000 trips, a 14.3 percent total increase from the five-year study period.

The DWR wants to provide opportunities for all visitors to its WMAs, but is limited by funding sources and directives. Nevertheless, the division has made progress at enhancing overall educational and viewing enjoyment. Examples include recently installed interpretive signs at the Clear Lake WMA and new visitor facilities at Compton's Knoll at the Salt Creek WMA. The Farmington Bay WMA, in partnership with the Davis County School District, recently built a portable learning center that allows fourth-grade students to study wetland ecosystems. There also are plans to construct a nature center on-site at the Farmington Bay WMA using funds obtained through public-private partnerships.

It's unclear how long the DWR can rely solely on hunter license revenue, matched with federal aid tax dollars, to operate the state's WMAs. As long as hunting license revenue is stable or slightly increasing (to offset inflation), the DWR can continue to provide the same level of service. But if traditional revenue sources continue to decline, which the current trend suggests, the DWR may have to consider alternative funding sources or a license fee increase. A shared solution that spreads the cost among all visitors may be the answer, but it's still too early to tell.

One thing is certain, Utah's waterfowl management areas are extremely valuable resources that Utahns cannot afford to lose. They are treasures for all to enjoy.

BY SCOTT ROOT
CENTRAL REGION CONSERVATION OUTREACH MANAGER

CHANGING TIMES

Upland game

Habitat is still a critical component

UTAH'S UPLAND GAME enthusiasts like to pay close attention to the status of the state's upland game populations. Most of them agree that habitat is the long-term key in determining whether Utah's upland species increase or decrease in number. These enthusiasts also discuss and debate the future of these species. Seasoned hunters complain that access and hunting success for species found on private property was much better 30 to 50 years ago than it is today.

Urban development and other land uses have been the biggest factor in reducing habitat for some of these species and finding access to hunt them. Clean farming, urban sprawl and other human practices have eliminated or limited nesting, brooding, winter and escape cover for pheasants, sage-grouse and other upland game species. Reduced habitats make it much easier for predators to search for prey, making the game of "hide-and-seek" far too easy for the "seeker."

The unpredictability of "Mother Nature" can also take a temporary toll on upland game. Extreme weather conditions, such as drought or persistent cold or wet weather, are always factors in determining how well upland game populations will do during any given year.

Now the good news!

Despite the negative factors that have affected some of Utah's upland game, you may be surprised to know that the "good ol' days" for many species are here now and that the future for some of these species looks even brighter! There are many positive things happening with Utah's upland game today.

The Division of Wildlife Resources and other natural resource management agencies have placed a major emphasis on maintaining and improving sagebrush conditions to benefit sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse and other wildlife throughout Utah. Many wetland, upland, desert and forest habitat projects also are being planned and completed every year. These projects provide significant benefits to upland game and other wildlife.

Another bright spot is a work force of more than 8,000 volunteers who have made these habitat projects a reality. Members of the DWR's Dedicated Hunter program make up the majority of these volunteers, and they have played a crucial role in many habitat enhancement projects over the last nine years. Many of these projects

PHOTO BY SCOTT ROOT

Ring-necked Pheasants are one of hunters' most popular upland game species.

Habitat for pheasants, and therefore, pheasant populations have been declining for several decades. However, other upland bird species such as forest grouse are abundant and offer great fall hunting opportunities.

Dean Mitchell, DWR Upland Game Coordinator, releases wild turkeys under the watch of Payson Jr. High School students.

would have never happened without this impressive work force.

Hunter and angler dollars have also made it possible for the DWR to protect more than 500,000 acres of important wildlife habitat. Organized groups can actually "adopt" a wildlife management area and assist with habitat projects or the upkeep of the area. Volunteer help is an important key in providing a promising future for all of Utah's wildlife species.

With the combination of upland game research, monitoring, habitat improvement projects, wildlife translocations (trapping and transplants) and other efforts, most of Utah's upland game populations are doing well. Good precipitation throughout Utah this spring also has given upland game populations a boost.

Many of Utah's upland species, such as Chukar Partridge, grouse and rabbits, are found primarily on public land, which offers Utah's hunters a benefit hunters in many states don't possess—free hunting access. This will always be a bright spot for those who love Utah's wildlife.

More good news!

The DWR continues to lead an aggressive program to translocate several upland species into appropriate areas. Pheasants, chukars, wild turkeys and other upland species are being released into areas to start new populations or enhance existing ones. Hunters have benefited greatly from this program. Pheasants purchased with hunting license dollars are used in five youth pheasant hunts that are held each fall.

Thousands of chukars are also released into popular chukar hunting areas every year. General release sites are listed on the DWR's Web site each September (the Web site address is *wildlife.utah.gov*). Helicopter counts last fall indicated an increase in Utah's chukar population. The DWR has also placed many guzzlers in various upland habitats. With the exception of ptarmigan (which live at high elevations), these rainwater catchment systems have greatly benefited nearly every upland species (and other wildlife species) by providing a water source during the extreme heat of summer.

Blue and Ruffed Grouse numbers have been up over the last few years. Many hunters have reported good success and agree that grouse numbers are up. I had a flock of more than 50 Blue Grouse fly up around me last year. They almost gave me a heart attack!

Quail, cottontail rabbit, snowshoe hare and partridge populations also have increased due to the efforts of many people and a little help from "Mother Nature" and her precipitation. Expect a great fall for viewing or hunting Utah's upland game!

For more wildlife information, visit the DWR's Web site at *wildlife.utah.gov.* It has a lot of great information, and you can even purchase your hunting license there. I also recommend two books that you may want to purchase while you're visiting the site, *"Access to Wildlife Lands"* and the *"Utah Wildlife Viewing Guide."*

BY BRENT STETTLER
NORTHERN REGION CONSERVATION OUTREACH MANAGER

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Off the road

Staying on the right track with OHVs

IT SEEMS LIKE the law-abiding majority always suffers the consequences when a few people break the rules. Volumes of laws passed by federal, state, county and city government attest to that… and the problem isn't going away any time soon.

Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) have become increasingly popular, offering a new dimension to outdoor recreation and leisure. Vast areas of mountain and desert terrain, which earlier had been restricted to horsemen and marathon hikers, have been opened to the average American by OHVs.

Exploration is integral to the American spirit. Most of us come from a pioneer or frontier heritage of some sort. Our forbearers left the "old country" to find a new life, new opportunity and new horizons. Many OHV riders hope to reconnect with that mindset. The frustration today is that there are so many people and so little frontier.

Natural resource managers, trying to strike a balance among user groups, are stuck between "a rock and a hard place." They want to facilitate outdoor recreation but have to contain the damage that it sometimes creates. It's a difficult task.

In recent years, complaints have beset law and policy makers about OHVs causing erosion, watershed damage and pollution. Fish and wildlife managers have had an earful, too. OHV riders are accused of degrading the quality of hunting, frightening and harassing wildlife, and destroying and fragmenting habitat.

The Division of Wildlife Resources and the Utah Wildlife Board are wrestling with the issue. Discussions with other states have been entertained for some time now. More are expected. Sportsmen can expect to hear more about hunting and OHVs as time goes on.

Around the country, discussions have gone back and forth over: 1) designation of hunting units or sub-units as off-limits to OHVs, 2) exceptions for people with disabilities, 3) allowance for game retrieval or hunting camp set-up and take-down, 4) prohibited use on roads not accessible by full-sized vehicles, 5) restrictions on time-of-day or night, 6) impacts on wildlife distribution, abundance and habitat use, 7) "fair chase" considerations, and so forth.

There's a lot at stake for OHV owners, manufacturers, retailers, land administrators and just about everyone else. An equitable resolu-

Riders pause to look at the scenery on designated trails above Davis County.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UTAH PARKS & RECREATION

ISTOCKPHOTO

OHVs are great fun, but they can also cause erosion and damage to wildlife habitat when used improperly.

tion will need to come from careful negotiation by stakeholders on all sides of the issue.

In Utah, any new wildlife-related OHV regulation will have to run through the public process, which includes the state's five regional advisory councils, the Utah Wildlife Board and even the Utah Legislature. Any forthcoming OHV regulation would have to complement rather than contradict rules already established by federal, state and local authorities.

OHV riding the right way

So what's an OHV rider to do? Becoming informed is a good start. There are many great information sources out there. A search for "off highway vehicles" on MSN turned up more than 7,000 Internet hits. Subjects included places to ride, groups to join, ways to shape public policy, news and views, and product information.

A couple of homegrown Web sites, *www.exploreutah.com* and *www.utahatvtrails.com*, offer good information. The "best pick" is *www.stateparks.utah.gov/ohv/faq.htm.* Park your mouse here for state laws, answers to commonly asked questions, downloadable travel maps and links to other information sources.

Interested in OHV education? Call 1-800-OHV-RIDE.

Need a travel map? Visit your local U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management office or print one out from the Internet.

It seems like every innovation or invention is trailed closely by ethical sideboards and new laws. That's life. Certainly, the OHV issue is no different.

Become an informed OHV rider and ride your machine safely and responsibly.

Seemingly healthy deer may carry CWD, so the DWR actively monitors and tests deer populations in several areas of the state.

BY BRENT STETTLER
CENTRAL REGION CONSERVATION OUTREACH MANAGER

BY LESLIE McFARLANE
WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

A NEW THREAT TO HUNTING?

CWD

Chronic wasting disease in Utah

Research continues in a hunt for answers to this troubling phenomenon, which has vexed hunters and wildlife managers across the nation. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal illness of the Cervidae (deer, elk and moose) family. In recent years, the disease appears to have spread geographically, posing a threat to the hunting industry, the big game ranching industry and wildlife management in general.

What is CWD?

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) is a relatively rare neurological disorder found only in wild and captive deer and elk herds in North America. CWD belongs to a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) that appear to be caused by prions, which are abnormal proteins. TSEs are slow-acting, degenerative diseases that affect the central nervous system of infected animals, eventually causing death. The disease occurs when prions accumulate within the central nervous systems of infected animals, creating sponge-like holes and lesions in the gray matter of the brain.

TSE diseases have been recognized in Europe since the mid-18th century, when they were first described in sheep. In the late 1960s, CWD was first recognized in a captive deer herd at a research facility in Colorado, but it wasn't until 1981 that the disease was found in the wild. By the mid-1990s, researchers knew that CWD occurred in free-ranging deer and elk herds in northeastern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. Since that time CWD has also been found in free-ranging animals in Illinois, Nebraska, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Utah and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. CWD has also been found in game ranches in Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Wyoming, as well as the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Other TSE diseases include scrapie in domestic sheep and goats, bovine spongiform encephalopathy or "mad cow disease" in livestock, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in humans. Although CWD shares features that are similar to other TSE diseases, it is a distinct disease that apparently only affects members of the Cervidae family, which includes deer, elk and moose.

What are the symptoms?

In the early stages of the disease, a deer or elk infected with CWD may not exhibit any symptoms. As the disease progresses, however, the animal may have difficulty swallowing, salivate excessively, lose bodily function, exhibit abnormal behavior and become emaciated. In very advanced stages, the animal may have trouble standing or walking, appear uncoordinated, hold its head in a lowered position and its ears may appear droopy. At this stage, death usually occurs within a matter of days. The incubation period for the disease can take 12 to 24 months in mule deer and up to 36 months in elk. Although most animals infected with the disease die within several months, in rare cases, death may be delayed by more than a year.

Is the disease contagious?

CWD appears to be confined to members of the Cervidae family, which includes mule deer, whitetail deer, elk and moose. In research situations, CWD could not be transmitted to livestock or other wildlife species outside of the cervid family.

The disease is thought to be transmitted between deer and elk through direct or close contact (shared feed and water), or by exposure to a source of contamination (urine, saliva, feces or infected animal remains).

Deer are more susceptible than elk to CWD, and prevalence of the disease among deer can be as high as 15 percent in infected areas. In elk, prevalence rates are usually lower than 1 percent. Research has shown that some elk may have a genetic resistance against prions and not all elk exposed to the infectious particles will develop the disease. Other research

TERRY KREEGER, WYOMING FISH AND GAME

Some deer exhibit clear signs of CWD, so hunters are encouraged to call the DWR if they spot a sick animal.

has shown that the prions that cause CWD may contaminate environments for years, even after infected deer and elk have been removed.

Are there risks to hunters?

The World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the National Institutes of Health and various other public health agencies have conducted extensive research on CWD. None of these organizations have been able to detect a link between CWD and any neurological disorders in humans. The World Health Organization has issued a statement that "There is currently no evidence that CWD in *cervidae* (deer and elk) is transmitted to humans."

However, health agencies and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources advise hunters to take certain precautions when handling deer or elk carcasses. When field dressing animals, hunters should practice the following:

- Don't harvest or eat animals that appear sick
- Wear rubber or latex gloves when field dressing and processing game meat
- Bone out the meat from deer or elk
- Remove all fat, membrane and connective tissues
- Minimize handling of the brain, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes
- Don't use household utensils to field dress or process meat
- Thoroughly clean all knives, equipment and work areas with a 50/50 bleach and water solution

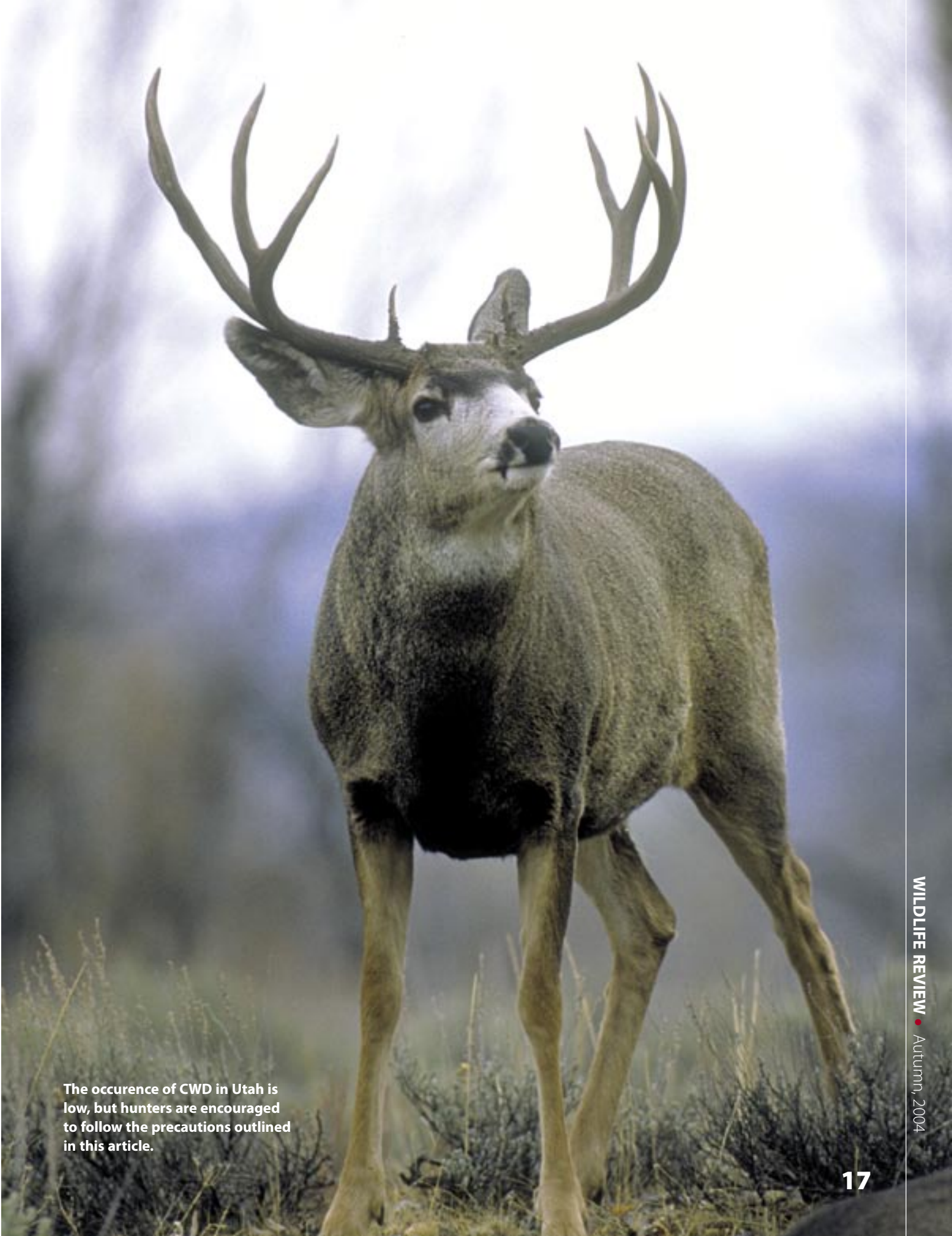
A growing problem

From 1996 to the present, the geographic range of CWD seems to have widened. It is not known if the higher incidence of CWD is due to increased surveillance, increased public awareness or from an actual spread of the disease.

To understand the dynamics of CWD, wildlife and agriculture officials in many states require CWD testing on both captive and wild populations of deer and elk. The interstate movement of carcasses, from hunter-harvested and captive animals, has also been strictly regulated to prevent the further spread of CWD.

In 2002, new restrictions were implemented in Utah to prevent the transport of carcasses or infective parts of animals from areas within other states or provinces where deer or elk have been diagnosed with CWD. Several states have also implemented similar regulations. Hunters should check with the managing agency to determine what restrictions are in place. Many states have also prohibited baiting and feeding of cervids, which concentrates animals and increases the spread of CWD and other diseases.

As a management tool, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources may also utilize hot-spot culling. Hot-spot culling has been recognized by several states as a way to potentially prevent the spread of CWD. When a positive



The occurence of CWD in Utah is low, but hunters are encouraged to follow the precautions outlined in this article.

ED MEYERS

Officer Wade Hovinga holds the skull of a CWD-positive buck from eastern Utah.

CWD sample is identified in a new area, the DWR will select a sample area around the new location and remove all deer within this area to be tested for CWD. This action will be taken to determine prevalence in the area and possibly prevent further spread of the disease.

What is the DWR doing?

Since 1998, approximately 6,000 tissue samples from individual deer and elk have been tested for CWD. A total of 11 positive deer have been found. As of June 2004, CWD seems to be centered in a localized area on Diamond Mountain near Vernal and on the LaSal Mountains near Moab. One positive sample was also found in an agricultural area east of Fountain Green. The DWR will continue to conduct an annual surveillance and monitoring program for CWD throughout Utah, particularly in areas where positive animals have been found, to determine the distribution and prevalence rates of the disease.

How you can help

Anyone who finds a sick or emaciated deer, elk or moose should immediately report the animal to a DWR office, biologist or conservation officer. The person reporting the animal should provide the best location possible, either using a Global Positioning Satellite system or by township, range, section and quarter section, so the animal may be located.

In addition, deer and elk hunters in certain areas of Utah will be asked to provide a sample from their harvested deer or elk for CWD testing. These samples will be collected at check stations throughout the state. Hunters who harvest trophy animals from areas where testing is needed may be requested to cooperate by removing the cape from the deer or elk in the field or by taking the head to a DWR office immediately after it's caped.

Testing for CWD

The DWR has identified sample areas throughout Utah from which tissue samples will be collected from hunter-harvested deer or elk. You can learn where these sample areas are by visiting the DWR Web site (wildlife.utah.gov).

If you're hunting outside a sample area, and want your deer or elk tested for CWD, the DWR can assist you in removing a tissue sample, but you will be responsible to submit the sample for testing. The lab charges a $25 processing fee.

In order to take a tissue sample, the head of the deer or elk must be provided. The animal must be at least 1.5 years old and must not have been dead for more than three to four days. In addition, the hunter will be asked to provide the exact location where the animal was harvested. After about four to six weeks, hunters may view the test results from their animal on the DWR Web site. Because of the high volume of samples, test results may take longer to report during certain times of the year.

The hunter of any animal that does test positive for CWD will be contacted by a DWR employee and will be given the option to surrender the antlers and meat of the animal for proper disposal. Any hunter with a positive animal who does surrender the meat and antlers to the DWR will be eligible for a free permit of the same type the following year.

The CWD management program is a surveillance program intended to determine the distribution and prevalence of CWD within Utah. Testing of tissues from hunter-harvested animals is not intended to certify an animal as "safe for human consumption."

More information

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' Web site has information regarding CWD within Utah (www.wildlife.utah.gov). Another excellent source of information is the Web site of the Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance, which is a partnership of public and private agencies and organizations. Their Web site address is www.cwd-info.org. The CWD Alliance maintains up-to-date information on CWD, in addition to Web site links to wildlife agencies.

The DWR thanks the hunters and sportsmen of Utah for their help in managing CWD. Without their support and assistance, the CWD management and surveillance programs implemented in Utah would not be possible.

BY PHIL DOUGLASS
NORTHERN REGION CONSERVATION OUTREACH MANAGER

EXTENDED DEER AND ELK HUNTS

Archery

Convenient hunt with special concerns

MOST HUNTERS are in search of a secret hunting spot, a place where they can escape crowds and roam the forest in search of wild game. For hunters, nothing adds to the anticipation of a good hunt more than finding an empty parking lot and a lone mountain with no other hunters in sight.

Such deer and elk hunting are closer than one might realize. Uncrowded hunting areas and hunts that run from late August through November are the hallmarks of extended archery hunts.

Robert Hasenyager, Northern Region supervisor for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says he has received positive comments from hunters about the extended archery hunts along the Wasatch Front. "I've had several people tell me that they like the hunt because, for several weeks, it gives them a chance to hunt for a couple of hours after work," he said. "It's close and convenient, and they can be in the mountains hunting within minutes of home."

These hunts also offer great opportunities to mentor young hunters. Through these hunts, parents can teach budding hunters the basics of woodsmanship, stalking, tracking, hunt preparation and safety.

In addition to the deer and elk hunting in these areas, the mountainous areas of the Wasatch Front and the South Slope of the Uintas often hold good populations of forest grouse. Forest grouse provide a challenge for young archers. The lessons learned from stalking, being patient and taking a good shot are lessons that can be applied to other hunting. Successfully taking a grouse with a bow and arrow certainly boosts the confidence and enthusiasm in young hunters!

Forest grouse are also excellent to eat, and anyone who has taken one with archery equipment deserves the great meal they provide. Remember that a small game license or combination license is required to hunt them. Utah's 2004 forest grouse season runs Sept. 11–Nov. 30.

There are different seasons and opportunities to take one buck, a deer of either sex or antlerless deer in the four areas that will be mentioned in this story.

Extended archery hunts are also available for elk hunters who have the proper permits. These hunters may take either a bull elk or a cow elk.

Purpose of the hunts

Most of the foothills along the Wasatch Front have been developed and the deer have adapted somewhat to residential landscapes. However, the deer have not adapted to the increased vehicle traffic that has accompanied the development of areas where they once spent their winters. Extended archery hunts began as an experimental management tool to harvest a growing population of "urban" deer that posed a danger to drivers. In addition to the loss of the deer, these accidents often resulted in extensive damage to vehicles. The presence of deer has also resulted in nuisance problems in backyards along the Wasatch Front's east bench.

In recent years, extended archery hunts were expanded to serve as a management tool to keep deer and elk out of agricultural areas in central Utah.

Safety and ethics

Because some of the extended archery hunt boundaries are close to residential and agricultural areas, hunters are required to complete a brief online course that outlines and emphasizes safe and ethical hunting. While these practices apply to these areas, the course is a good refresher for all hunters. The course can be found at *wildlife.utah.gov*.

Deer hunting areas/seasons

Wasatch Front extended archery deer area

- Hunter's choice: Aug. 21–Nov. 30, 2004
- Antlerless deer only: Dec. 1–Dec. 15, 2004

The Wasatch Front Extended Archery Hunt Area extends from Draper to South Weber. Archery deer hunters may take a deer of either sex

PHIL DOUGLASS

It's important to respect neighboring residents during the extended hunts.

during the extended season. This area also offers hunters an opportunity to pursue antlerless deer after the hunter's choice season closes.

Steve Flinders, wildlife manager for the DWR's Central Region, says archery hunting is the only hunt method allowed in the Salt Lake County portion of the unit. Because of large residential areas in the hunting area, it's important that hunters are well informed about issues and concerns of area residents regarding hunting and hunters.

"It's really important that hunters are informed and behave in safe, ethical ways," Flinders said. "The ethics course on the Web site has resolved many of the problems that we initially had with this hunt."

Lower elevations of the hunting area are mostly private property and residential areas. The Davis County portion includes a section of Hill Air Force Base property. Opportunities to hunt the base are limited to those who call (801) 777-4618.

Ogden extended archery deer area

- One buck deer only: Sept. 18–Nov. 30, 2004

This hunt gives hunters two and a half months to find a nice buck—and there are some nice ones to be found!

The area has a great variety of terrain. Mount Ogden, Lewis Peak and Ben Lomond Peak are the highest places in the area. The extended archery deer hunt area does NOT extend to the river lowlands and agricultural areas of Weber County. The hunt area lies mostly between I-15 and Ridgeline (the front of the mountain from Uintah to Perry). The Weber County portion of this hunt has numerous trailheads that allow access to the hunting area.

Uinta Basin extended archery deer area

- Hunters choice: Aug. 21–Nov. 30, 2004
- Antlerless deer only: Dec. 1–Dec. 15, 2004

The Uinta Basin Extended Archery hunt area runs from the South Slope of the Uinta Mountains down to the croplands in Pleasant Valley (south of Myton) and extends roughly from Rock Creek on the west to the Green River on the east. The area is deceivingly big to look at on a map. This area is a maze of private lands and tribal lands. Tribal lands are not included in the hunting area.

Elk hunting areas/seasons

Archery hunters may take one elk of the hunter's choice (either sex) on any of the following units:

Wasatch Front extended archery elk area

- Hunter's choice: Sept. 18–Dec. 15, 2004

The Wasatch Front Extended Archery Area for elk includes the Ogden Area. The Ogden and Wasatch Front are two separate areas for extended archery deer hunts.

Nebo West Desert and Sanpete Valley extended and Uintah Basin archery elk areas

Flinders says the reason for the Nebo and Sanpete hunts differs from the Wasatch Front hunts. "We want to send the message to the elk in these areas that the agricultural areas are not the place to be," he said.

- Nebo West Desert: Nov. 15–Dec. 31, 2004
- Sanpete Valley: Nov. 15–Dec. 31, 2004
- Uinta Basin: Hunter's choice — Sept. 18–Dec. 15, 2004

Archery hunters who obtain the archery ethics course certificate of completion for extended archery hunts are cautioned that rifle hunts do occur during the extended archery season. During these antlerless and general rifle hunts, archery hunters must wear hunter orange.

While the extended archery hunts offer extended hunting opportunities and a chance to hunt in uncrowded areas, they are not necessarily easy hunts. Terrain is challenging and great sensitivity to private property owners and non-hunters is required. Archery hunters are encouraged to consult the 2004 big game proclamations before obtaining a permit.

BY DIANA VOS
PROJECT WILD COORDINATOR

UTAH—LAND OF NATURAL

Diversity

Dry deserts, mountains and wetlands

UTAH'S LANDSCAPE features a wealth of different environments—dusty deserts, forested mountains and watery wetlands—ecosystems of great diversity that not only offer endless, breathtaking vistas but also support the wide range of wildlife that inhabits the state.

Utah is primarily desert. It's desert, however, within which several major ecoregions of North America—including the Mojave Desert, the Great Basin Desert, the Rocky Mountains and the Colorado Plateau—meet to make Utah one of the most biologically diverse states in the nation.

In this article, you'll find information about Utah's unique desert regions.

The Mojave Desert: A small portion of the Mojave Desert reaches into Utah, covering only the extreme southwest corner of the state. The smallest of North American's three hot deserts (the other two are the Sonoran and the Chihuahuan), the Mojave Desert covers 54,000 square miles, spanning from southwest Utah across Arizona and much of southern California. It includes the famous Death Valley National Monument.

The Mojave Desert is classified as a "hot" desert because it receives nearly all of its precipitation as rainfall. Also, because it receives less than 8 inches of rain per year, it is considered the driest of all the North American deserts. Rainfall throughout the region varies greatly, however. For example, St. George receives an average of 7.95 inches in a year, whereas Death Valley has an annual rainfall of 1.7 inches. When rain comes, it falls mostly as scattered high intensity storms of short duration. Not only is the Mojave dry, in Utah air temperatures in the region can reach as high as 115° F. during the summer.

The Mojave Desert is characterized by parched mountains that rise abruptly from alternating plains or basins. Elevations range from 300 feet below sea level to 11,000 feet above sea level, with the most dramatic relief around Death Valley. Between the mountains, deep alluvial fans

JIM WEIS

The Mohave Desert reaches only into the extreme southwest corner of Utah.

The Great Basin is an arid region characterized by broad valleys and numerous long, narrow mountain ranges.

spread outward, and playas, sand dunes and alkaline springs dot the landscape.

Far from barren, the Mojave Desert supports a diverse array of unique and fascinating plant communities. Widely spaced low shrubs, including creosote bush, Mojave sage and mesquite predominate in the valleys. Cacti and a vast variety of wildflowers are featured as well. The only "tree" in the area is the spiny-armed Joshua tree (actually a yucca), one of the many endemic species (found nowhere else in the world) living within the Mojave Desert.

The region's diverse plant life supports an incredible array of animals. Sidewinders, gila monsters, desert tortoises, road runners, kit foxes, bats, bobcats, kangaroo rats, hummingbirds, scorpions, tarantulas, pupfish and yucca moths are just a few of the area's many wildlife residents.

The Great Basin: The Great Basin is a cold desert with snowy winters and hot, dry summers. Spanning an area of parallel mountain ranges, from Utah's Wasatch Range on the east to the Sierra Nevada on the west, south of the Snake River Plain on the north to the bounds of the Mojave Desert on the south, the Great Basin is the largest desert in the United States. Covering approximately 190,000 square miles, it contains about 160 north-south trending mountain ranges with elevations of 7,000 to 8,000 feet. The area also has broad, sediment-filled valleys at elevations near 4,000 feet.

Sitting in the shadow of the Pacific mountain systems, the Great Basin receives little rainfall as winds passing over the Sierras are drained of their moisture. Most of the precipitation (60 percent) the Great Basin does receive comes as snow in the winter. Because the winters are cold, most plants are dormant (not growing) at that time so they can't make use of the winter precipitation. The remainder of the moisture arrives as summer downpours and runs off in flash floods too quickly for plants to use.

In some places, solar radiation is so intense that evaporation exceeds precipitation by a factor of eight. Annual precipitation averages four to 10 inches with the mountains receiving up to 18 inches per year. Temperatures average 45° to 55° F., with great

The Colorado Plateau is a diverse area consisting of high mountains and deep canyons carved by running water.

extremes between seasons.

Within the seemingly endless expanse of the Great Basin are virtually lifeless sun-baked playas; alkaline flats favored by salt-tolerant plants such as salt bush; greasewood and shadscale; salt lakes hosting brine shrimp and flies; sand dunes teaming with rodents; marshes that provide crucial habitat for migratory birds; vast expanses of sagebrush-steppe; pinyon-juniper woodlands; and mountain islands harboring remnant plants, aspen glens and subalpine coniferous forests.

Often referred to as the "sagebrush ocean," gray-green sagebrush blankets 45 percent of the Great Basin. In some areas, sage composes more than 70 percent of the plant cover and 90 percent of the biomass. With a root system that is often three times the diameter of its crown, sagebrush is able to tap sufficient water from the desert's scarce supply. The gray-green color of its leaves also reflects light, thereby decreasing loss of water through its leaves.

Sage is a valuable source of food for several animals, including sage grouse, pygmy rabbits, mule deer and pronghorn, and is one of the few plants available year round—especially in the winter. Sagebrush also provides homes for a variety of wildlife, including the sage thrasher, sage sparrow and sagebrush lizard.

Other wildlife of the region include mountain lions, coyotes, gray fox, jackrabbits and cottontails, various small rodents, reptiles (such as the Great Basin rattlesnake), spadefoot toads, chukar and Hungarian partridges (two transplanted non-native game birds) and a wealth of native desert-dwelling birds. These include red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, burrowing owls, horned larks and migratory shorebirds and waterfowl.

Fish species include native fishes of the former Lake Bonneville, such as the least chub, Utah chub, speckled dace and the Bonneville cutthroat trout. Populations of these natives, now mostly confined to isolated bodies of water, are being replaced by introduced species such as rainbow trout, largemouth bass and mosquito fish.

The Colorado Plateau: The Colorado Plateau is a large province covering nearly 200,000 square miles

In addition to deserts, Utah also contains high mountains and wetlands.

extending across eastern Utah, western Colorado northern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. It is one of the most intricate landscapes on Earth. Actually not just one plateau, the Colorado Plateau is a huge area filled with stacked plateaus, surrounded by highlands to the north and lowlands to the south and west. A unique geologic history involving laying down of sediments, mountain building events, uplift and erosion by water and wind have resulted in a strikingly colorful sculpted landscape of arches, alcoves, canyons, domes, towers, spires, bridges, potholes, hoodoos and more.

Except for the valley floors carved deep by its major rivers, the entire Colorado Plateau is above an elevation of 5,000 feet, with portions reaching up to 12,000 feet. With high alpine regions, coniferous forests, salt deserts and microbiotic (cryptogamic) soils, biodiversity abounds within the Colorado Plateau. Though much of the region is covered with sagebrush, shadscale and pinyon-juniper plant associations, a great variety of climate, elevation and soil combinations create numerous microzones that support an amazing range of plant communities. In terms of plant life, the plateau is the richest region in the Intermountain West.

A few of the animal residents occupying various areas include the collared lizard, black-tailed jackrabbit, coyote, mule deer, bobcat, mountain lion, desert bighorn sheep, elk, Abert's squirrel, wild turkey, mourning dove, midget-faded rattlesnake, Stellar's Jay, raven, Canyon Wren, Peregrine Falcon and Mexican Spotted Owl.

Rivers and streams threading throughout the plateau house frogs, toads, garter snakes, snails, beavers, dragonflies, razorback suckers and numerous other aquatic species.

Across portions of the Colorado Plateau within Utah, from the Unita Basin south through the canyonlands region, annual precipitation varies considerably, ranging between six and 35 inches per year. The range in precipitation reflects the range in elevation across the region, with higher levels of precipitation falling as snow in the mountainous areas. Most rainfall occurs during the spring and fall seasons, and summers are very dry and hot. Temperatures average between 35 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit, with colder temperatures occurring at higher elevations.

Utah's Mountains and Wetlands

From reading this article, you can see that Utah's deserts are complex. But the state's deserts are only one of the amazing environments found in Utah. Utah also has incredible forested mountains and a wealth of wonderful wetlands.

We usually think of these areas as separate regions. But because wetlands are contained within Utah's deserts and forested mountain areas, and because the existence of mountains plays a significant role in capturing the water streaming within and filling the wet areas of the state, these environments might actually be viewed as one unique, diverse and intriguing landscape that supports the fascinating flora and fauna of Utah.

To learn about Utah's forests and wetlands, you can read parts II and III of this article online at *wildlife.utah.gov/projectwild/forestsandwetlands*. An educator's lesson featuring Utah's deserts, forests and wetlands, excellent free resources that can be requested and a list of literature connections can be found there as well.

If you are unable to access the Internet, contact Project WILD at (801) 538-4719 or e-mail *DianaVos@utah.gov* to obtain the information found at the Web site.

Getting WILD!

Utah's WILD Notebook is produced by Utah's Project WILD program. WILD workshops, offered by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, provide teachers and other educators with opportunities for professional development and a wealth of wildlife education activities and materials to help students learn about wildlife and its conservation.

For a current listing of Project WILD educator workshops, visit the Project WILD Web site at *wildlife.utah.gov/projectwild* or e-mail *DianaVos@utah.gov*.

MARNIE LEE
ASSISTANT MANAGER, HARDWARE RANCH

SEASONS OF CHANGE AT

Hardware Ranch

The cold weather and elk will return

AS SUMMER FADES into fall, and changes in the landscape begin to reach Blacksmith Fork Canyon in Northern Utah, elk that are slowly making their way to the meadow at the Hardware Ranch Wildlife Management Area begin to bugle in the distance.

Elk cows and calves begin appearing at the ranch with the first snowfall. As winter sneaks in, bulls join the growing herd. As a Division of Wildlife Resources employee fires up the tractor to load previously bailed native grass hay, all of the elks' heads turn to watch, wait and listen. In the early hours of this winter morning, they know breakfast is on its way.

Soon their heads will turn again as they hear the bells of the first horse drawn sleigh of the afternoon. They'll give the sleigh and its cargo of wildlife watchers little interest before they go back to munching their feed.

The Division of Wildlife Resources has operated a supplemental feeding program for big game animals at the Hardware Ranch WMA, with a primary focus on feeding and researching elk, for more than 50 years. The program began at a time when elk and residents of Cache Valley were locked in conflict over winter rangeland in the valley. A feeding program was one of many solutions developed. As the feeding program became a success, wildlife managers were able to expand their focus to other big game species, managing the 14,000-plus acres of Hardware Ranch for big game winter range and the myriad of other wildlife species that live there.

The success of the feeding program also brought the division an opportunity to provide a unique wildlife watching experience. Soon hundreds of people—from hunters to photographers—lined up to ride the sleighs through the elk herd. In the 1970s, a visitor center was built with displays highlighting the DWR's role in managing wildlife, information on the natural history of elk and elk biology, hunting and wildlife watching opportunities.

Over time, the mission of the Hardware Ranch WMA has expanded. In the past, wildlife viewing opportunities at the ranch have focused on the elk wintering at the ranch. As spring emerged and the elk left the meadow, Hardware Ranch began the transition from a public wildlife

LYNN CHAMBERLAIN

The mission of Hardware Ranch has expanded beyond feeding wintering elk.

LYNN CHAMBERLAIN

Each winter, public sleigh and wagon rides give visitors a chance to get up close and personal with Hardware Ranch elk.

viewing playground to a slower-paced ranch and research facility. Although the ranch property has always been open year-round for self-guided recreational use and wildlife watching, there have been few division-sponsored activities for people to enjoy.

That's all changed. This year, 2004, is the first year public activity has been encouraged at Hardware Ranch throughout the year. We have expanded our guided wildlife viewing opportunities beyond the sleigh ride and elk viewing to include other species at the ranch. All activities focus on the myriad of wildlife that live at the ranch and the sagebrush steppe habitat they call home.

Public school programs also have grown, from winter sleigh ride visits to conservation programs offered throughout the school year. In addition to the much-favored "All About Elk" program, which includes building a healthy habitat for elk and a sleigh ride through the herd, starting in September "Beaver Tails" and "Winter Ways" will be offered. "Beaver Tails" is an exploration of beavers and their unique lifestyle, offered at the ranch's very own beaver dam. "Winter Ways" will turn students into hibernating bears, migrating elk and dormant plants. Students will discover the survival tactics of plants and the wildlife that winter at Hardware Ranch.

Sleigh rides through the wintering elk heard, moonlight rides and dinners will still be offered this winter. If you prefer a warmer wildlife viewing experience, however, you may enjoy our new fall elk viewing rides that begin in October. Rides will offer weekend visitors a chance to view elk at a distance, before they move into the meadow. If you prefer even warmer weather, a late summer wildlife watching opportunity may be the thing for you. Although the elk are gone, four days a week we will offer "Wagons Wild," a guided wagon ride through sagebrush steppe habitat, a nature walk by a beaver dam and open air dining.

Opportunities also are endless for those who lean more to exploring the ranch on their own. If you're riding a horse, pulling a fifth-wheel camper or snowmobiling through in the winter, there is a place for you at the ranch. The Division of Wildlife Resources has partnered with the Division of Parks and Recreation to provide you a safe and fulfilling recreational experience.

Beginning in June, the ranch's visitor center will be open on weekends until December, when it will be open every day of the week except Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Ranch staff will be available to provide you with maps and information about the area. If you're visiting from October through March, there is no need to pack a lunch—the Sun Runner Ridge Café can cure your hunger.

Increasing the already excellent wildlife viewing opportunities at the ranch is a result of innovative quality habitat management by the Division of Wildlife Resources. Managing wildlife means managing their habitat—consequently, the DWR is taking a more aggressive role in managing sagebrush steppe habitat and is working towards increasing the scope of wildlife that benefit from management at the ranch. Sagebrush steppe study sites have been established to better understand the effect drought has on sagebrush, how to reestablish sagebrush after it's lost and improved methods of sagebrush enhancement.

By better understanding the sagebrush steppe habitat at Hardware Ranch, and by taking an aggressive role in wildlife and habitat management, the Division of Wildlife Resources can increase opportunities for the public to enjoy wildlife today and in the future.

We also want the public to participate in habitat restoration and study projects. We're doing this through volunteer work and education programs. With the changing seasons come changing activities at the ranch. If you're interested in more information about Hardware Ranch or want to know how to get involved in our activities, please call us at (435) 753-6206.

BY DAN CHRISTENSEN
MANAGER, HARDWARE RANCH

DEDICATED HUNTER & OTHER

Volunteers

Help is on the rise in Utah

OF ALL THE THINGS—bad and good—to come out of the horror of September 11, 2001, one of the most telling is that we Americans are getting back to our roots. When polled, many indicate that more quality leisure time with family and friends is as important as salary and benefits.

Lucky us! We live in Utah, a state with far better than average public lands and a wild and scenic diversity that defy imagination. From the rugged red rock canyons to the snow capped Uintas, mystical Great Salt Lake and the majestic Wasatch, Bear and Beaver ranges, such bounty is a legacy beyond the day-to-day problems of the world.

One of the new realities we face is where to go to find quality peace. We are still torn between the ease of the Internet and the challenge of the great outdoors. Each has its place, but the little black boxes and big screens don't breathe fresh air, flow dreams like a river, or see dragons in the white clouds of a summer sky. These domains belong to nature. Sadly, even these natural treasures now come at a higher cost, and increasingly the price rises faster than budgets and good intentions can match.

Enter Utah's volunteers, who in 2003 contributed nearly one hundred thousand hours of volunteer service to the Division of Wildlife Resources alone.

In January of last year, a scientific sample survey was conducted on behalf of the Utah Commission on Volunteers. Some of the findings and conclusions establish a context for how much our neighbors actually help us. For example, according to the survey, nearly 60 percent of Utahns say they have increased their volunteer efforts since September 11, 2001. Four out of five Utahns (80 percent of those age 16 or older) say they volunteer at least five hours per week. This compares to less than 30 percent nationally.

The survey also found that the majority of Utahns prefer to volunteer on an ongoing basis and average between one to 10 hours of service per month. Additionally, a report from Volunteers of America indicates that 73 percent of Utah teens volunteer at least 4.75 hours per month, compared to 3.5 hours for teens elsewhere in the United States.

Given current times and circumstances, few volunteer causes are more important than the thousands of hours donated in support of programs run by the Division of Wildlife

DAVID LEE

Volunteers often donate equipment and supplies in addition to labor.

Resources. Volunteers reseeded burned hillsides, conducted bird censuses, built fences, staffed deer check stations, helped with school and scout tours, cleaned ponds, rivers and streams, drove horse-drawn wagons, fed elk, planted seedlings, helped with hunter education programs, and taught kids to fish in the mountains and the state's new urban fisheries.

The dollar value their good works saved the DWR last year is calculated at about $1.3 million. Even more valuable are these people taking time to support the important wildlife, habitat and people initiatives the DWR has established as priority programs. Their efforts recall a time of hometowns, good neighbors and hunting and fishing tales that have bound families and friends for generations—the kind of simpler times and quieter places many of us want to find again.

Promoting this type of participation in wildlife associated outdoor recreation is a primary goal for the DWR, and the volunteers help with projects in the very areas and activities that make it possible for the Division to open or improve outdoor experiences for everyone.

David Lee is a DWR biologist working on habitat procurement and enhancement projects in and around Utah Lake. In 2002, Utah volunteers donated about $36,000 in time and services to projects he manages, benefiting hundreds of species in the process.

"The volunteers do a good job, but it's all about planning and doing preparation ahead of time," Lee said. "We need to be ready before they arrive. It's also important for them to understand what we're doing, so I spend some time telling them about the project and specifically how they will affect wildlife and habitat. I have volunteers that come back for other projects because they see the difference they make."

Jodie Anderson is the volunteer coordinator for the DWR's Northern Region. From July 2003 through the first part of May 2004, she planned and coordinated more than 6,200 hours of volunteer effort. On the first Saturday in May she was in the sun-drenched foothills above Hyrum, Utah, with 13 volunteers who had come to repair a fence damaged by elk during the winter. "We worked on a little more than a mile of fence" she said. "Some of it we tore out and put back, some just had to be straightened out and fixed. It was a 10-hour day, but we got it done."

DAVID LEE

Volunteers stand on top of the viewing stand they constructed near Utah Lake.

The DWR had to fix the fence after it was damaged by elk looking for scarce winter food. If not for the volunteers, the division would have had to pay its own personnel for 130 hours of work. Andersen noticed another benefit from the outing. "Three of the men brought their teenage sons, and they worked real hard and seemed to have a good time," she said.

All of the men who helped were hunters. Based on this unique experience, it's possible that their sons recognized the merit of being outdoors and promoting healthy wildlife and habitat. The DWR actively encourages hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing or simply enjoying the great outdoors as a heritage value that can and should cross generational boundaries.

The answer to why people donate time to the DWR is as varied as their backgrounds. For more than seven years, Dick Slater has volunteered every week as a part-time information technician at the DWR's Northern Region office in Ogden.

"I suppose it started because I was a retiree dying of boredom," Slater said. "I've always been an avid hunter and fisherman, and so when the opportunity came to work with the Division [DWR]—I jumped at it." Now, several hundred volunteer hours later, he still says, "The people are the best part."

Many volunteers, like Dick Slater, are in it for the long haul because they recognize the need and the opportunity to share with others who value the same things. As the shock of 9-11 fades, so may the urgency to spend quality time in quiet places. Meanwhile, Utah volunteers continue to contribute to an unmatched legacy of service.

2004 hunting season dates

Upland game

- Morning Dove: Sept. 1 to Sept. 30, 2004
- Band-tailed Pigeon: Sept. 1 to Sept. 30, 2004
- White-tailed Ptarmigan: Sept. 4 to Oct. 15, 2004
- Forest Grouse (Blue and Ruffed): Sept. 11 to Nov. 30, 2004
- Sandhill Crane:* Sept. 2004
- Chukar Partridge:* Sept. 18, 2004 to Jan. 31, 2005
- Sage-Grouse:* Sept. 18 to Sept. 26, 2004
- Hungarian Partridge:* Sept. 18, 2004 to Jan. 31, 2005
- Sharp-tailed Grouse: Nov. 6 to Nov. 14, 2004
- Pheasant:* Nov. 6 to Dec 5, 2004
- Quail (California and Gambel's):* Nov. 6 to Dec. 31, 2004
- Cottontail rabbit: Sept. 18, 2004 to Feb. 28, 2005
- Snowshoe hare: Sept. 18, 2004 to Feb. 28, 2005
- Turkey: Apr. 3 to May 31, 2004

Waterfowl

- Opener: Oct. 2, 2004
- Youth Day: Sept. 25, 2004

Black bear

- Spring hunt: April 10 to May 24, 2004
- Fall hunt: Aug. 28 to Oct. 2, 2004 and Nov. 1 to Nov. 27, 2004

Furbearer

- Badger, gray fox, kit fox, ringtail, spotted skunk, weasel: Oct. 11, 2003 – Feb. 15, 2004
- Beaver, mink:** Oct. 11, 2003 – Apr. 19, 2004
- Bobcat: Nov. 19, 2003 – Feb. 15, 2004
- Marten: Oct. 11, 2003 – Feb. 15, 2004
- Jackrabbit & coyote: No license required, may be hunted all year

Bucks, bulls, once-in-a-lifetime

- Deer
  - Archery: Aug. 21 to Sept. 17, 2004
  - Muzzleloader: Sept. 29 to Oct. 7, 2004
  - Rifle: Oct. 23 to Oct. 31, 2004
  - Limited entry: See proclamation
- Elk
  - Archery: Aug. 26 – Sept. 17, 2004
  - Rifle: Oct. 9 – Oct. 21, 2004
  - Muzzleloader: Nov. 6 – Nov. 14, 2004
  - Limited entry: (see proclamation)
  - Youth: Sept. 18 to Sept. 28, 2004
- Pronghorn*
  - Archery: Aug. 21 – Sept. 17, 2004
  - Any legal weapon: Sept. 11 – Sept. 28, 2003
- Bull moose:* Sept. 18 to Sept. 28 and Oct. 9 to Oct. 31, 2004
- Bison:* Nov. 6 to Dec. 31, 2004
- Desert bighorn sheep:* Sept. 25 to Nov. 5, 2004
- Bighorn, Rocky Mountain:* Sept. 25 to Nov. 30, 2004
- Rocky Mountain Goat:* Sept. 18 to Oct. 24, 2004

Cougar

- Limited Entry:* Dec. 13, 2003 to June 1, 2004
- Harvest Objective:* Dec. 13, 2003 – June 1, 2004

* Dates given are aggregate dates for multiple hunt dates. Please be sure to check the proclamation(s) for hunt dates specific to your hunt area.

** See proclamation for list of closed areas.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Information hotline: 1 (801) 596-8660
Toll-free info. hotline: 1 (877) 592-5169
National fishing hotline: 1 (800) 275-3474
Utah bird line: 1 (801) 538-4730
Cougar harvest objective hotline: 1 (888) 668-5466
Poaching hotline: 1 (800) 662-DEER
Web site address: www.wildlife.utah.gov

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